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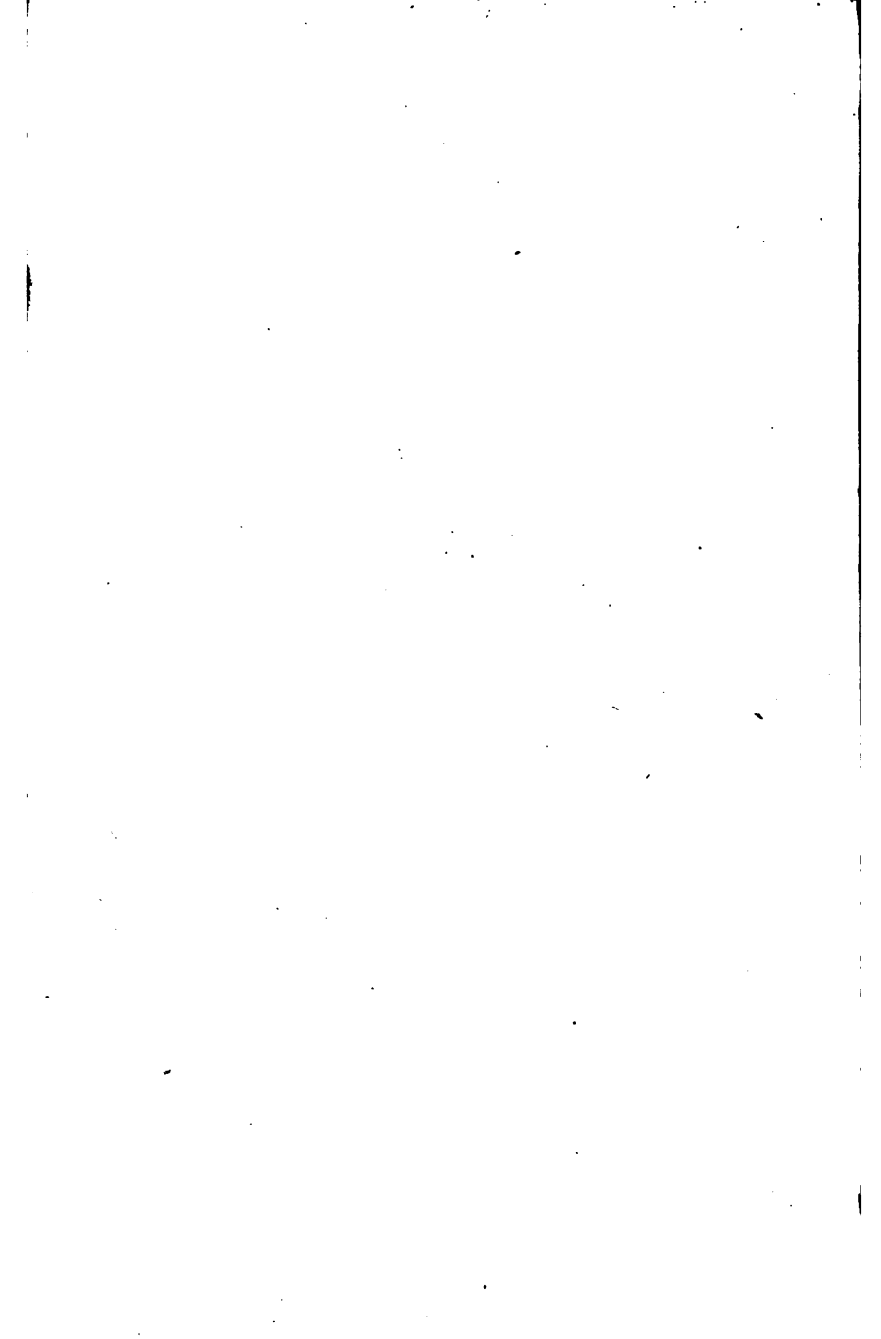
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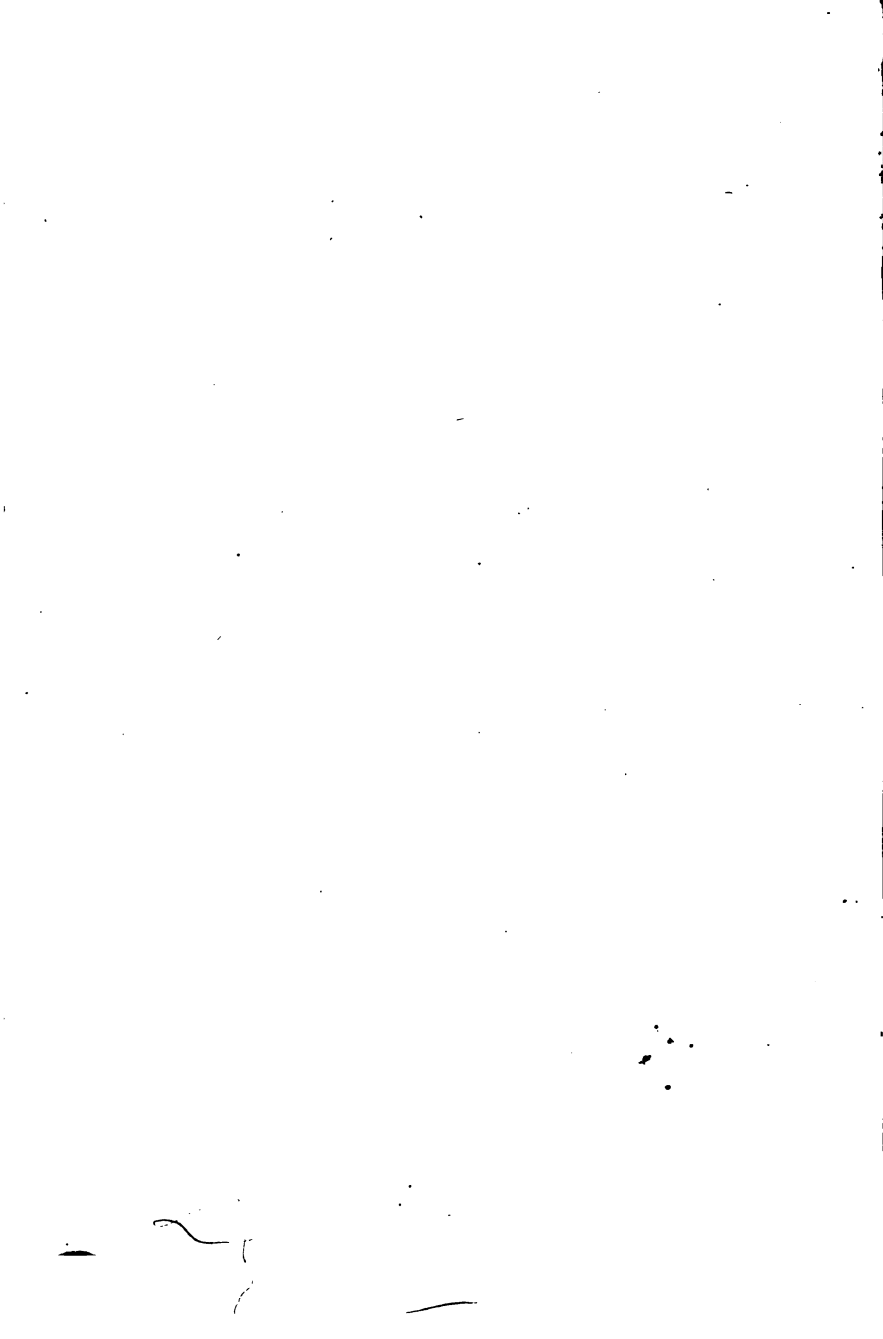
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# HAWN COURSE *in* PUBLIC SPEAKING *for Self Instruction*

HENRY GAINES HAWN

*Orator, Lecturer,  
Author, Instructor*

*Dedicated to all men  
and women who feel  
the call of Progress*



*gestures*

Book Two



HAWN CORPORATION

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New York

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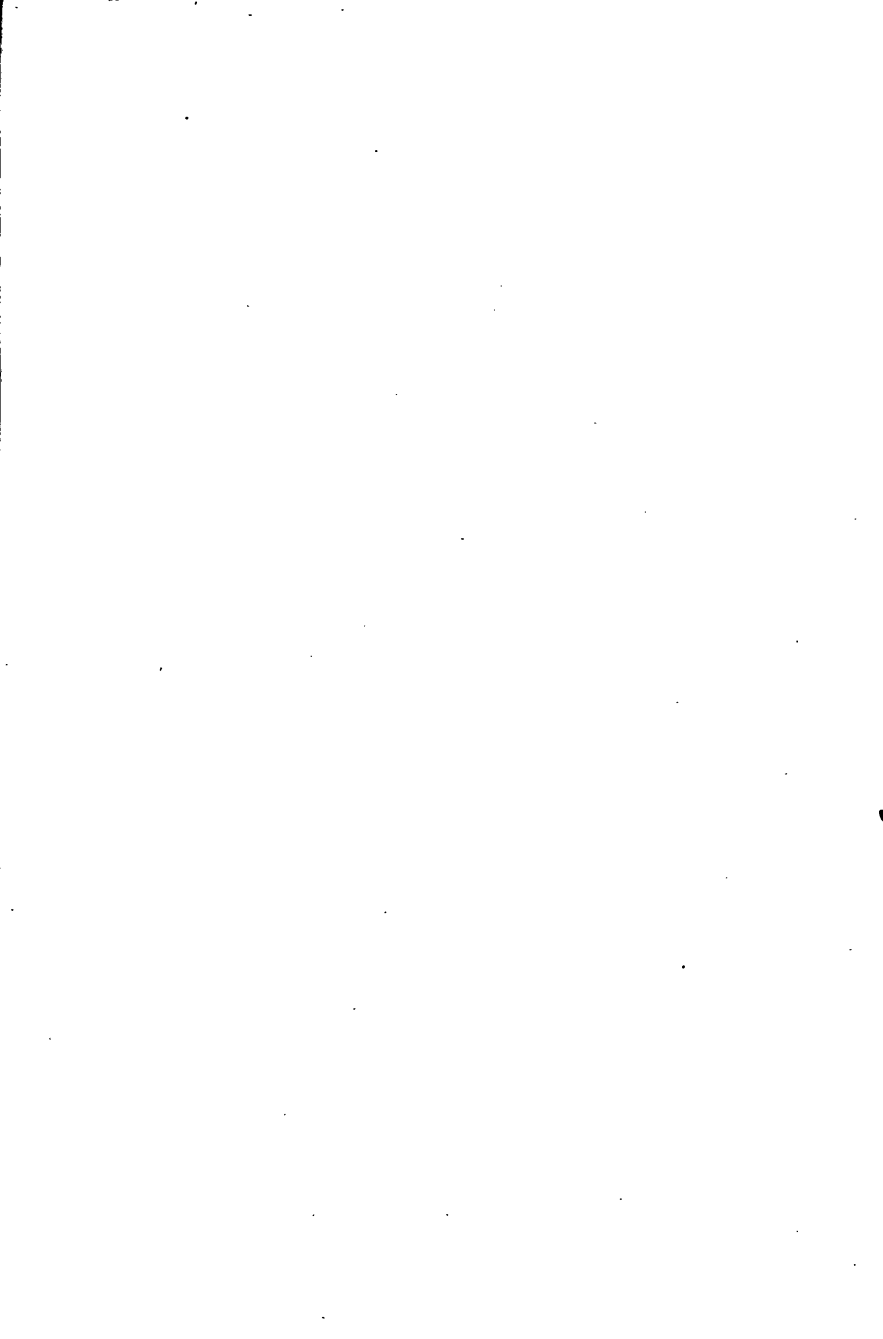
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## *FOREWORD*

**P**OISE, Position and Gesture, considered in the light of an appropriate and natural adaptation of the body to the words and sentiments of a discourse, are essential parts of Oratory. They add style to one's delivery, and conviction to one's language.

Ancient Greek and Roman orators were given to forceful Gestures, which seem to have formed the beginning and end of their delivery. Cicero contended that power of Gesture was more potent than the power of words. While the modern school of oratory does not agree in this, it is undeniable that Gesture has its uses but should be employed with skill and in moderation. To stand motionless while uttering words expressing fervor or energetic action is to deprive them of much of their significance. Some Gestures should accompany words and it is of consequence that they be appropriate.

French and Italians, though usually esteemed excellent orators, have a habit of overcharging their oratory with Gesture. The effect is often ludicrous to an American, accustomed to more restrained physical expression.

The old school of oratory, to which Webster and Clay belonged, employed much forceful action. Their Gestures were often as overdone as their language was stilted. Their style of delivery would appear archaic in a speech of to-day. Modern speakers have greatly modified and simplified the use of Gesture to suit the taste and genius of our land, and it is to this national taste that we must conform if we wish to win national appreciation.

Those who would succeed as public speakers must acquire the art of delivery in vogue, must learn the object and significance of Poise, Position and Gesture, must learn when to use and when to avoid certain movements and how to harmonize these movements with the spoken words.

In *Book One* of the Hawn Course the records of "*A Vision of the Past*" and "*The Message*" were analyzed in relation to Poise, Position and Gesture for these particular speeches. In *Book Two*, we go into the subject more thoroughly, illustrating and analyzing

the meaning and utility of every oratorical motion of the head, eyes, feet, arms and hands, and giving a great number of *Stock Gestures* that a speaker will find useful in public discourse.

These are not fanciful drawings showing exaggerated motions, but actual photographs of the author, Henry Gaines Hawn, delivering and employing Gesture. They are authentic and accurate, easy to follow and are intended to take the place of the teacher in person. A careful study of *Book Two* and conscientious observance of its simple indications will enable any speaker to become proficient in this physical fundamental of public speech.

## CHAPTER I

# POISE, POSITION *and* GESTURE DEFINED

### *Poise as Applied to Public Speaking*

**T**HE word Poise means balance—mental as well as physical. Even when perturbed, the assumption of a correct physical position implying a state of mental ease at once wins the confidence of an audience, reacts upon the speaker and gives him Poise. In other words, if you are in a state of nervous dread of an audience, or timid in beginning your speech, just reflect that you are a man among men, and without condescension or apology are about to express your inner convictions in a straight-forward, simple manner. This reflection will help you to ease of mind, and by taking the physical Position which denotes this, you will quickly induce the desired mental Poise. With some speakers this response from *Physical Poise* to *Mental Poise* is quicker than with others. No matter how long a time may elapse before confidence in yourself comes to you, the correct position will suggest Poise to the audience the moment it is assumed.



*Position Influences the Impression*

In delivering a speech, it is not only the tongue that speaks, but the whole body that utters, in a manner definite and convincing. The moment a speaker rises before an audience his physical attitude creates an impression. He may be a man of education with a dignified message, but for want of proper cultivation or care, his body may convey a contrary impression. An erect attitude expresses dignity while slouching carelessness or indifference of position indicates just the opposite.

The bearing of a man has a moral influence upon an audience. The feet, legs and arms as well as other parts of the body, are all units of the physical. Neither the awkwardness of the rustic, with toes turned in and knees bent, nor the effeminate affectations of the dancing master are desirable. A speaker should adopt such attitudes as are consistent with a manly personality and a dignified bearing, and one always adapted to his subject matter. Positions of the body are fully illustrated in Chapters III and IV of this book.

*Dignity Inspires Confidence*

The significance of having the body as a whole in an easy Poise and Position, suggesting dignity and confidence, cannot be over-rated. Every person in the audience at once takes a quick survey of the speaker. If he is unknown, an unjust attitude of animosity may result; hence the need of making a good impression at the start.

After this more or less involuntary critical examination of the speaker by the audience, every eye focuses itself on the eyes of the speaker, and these eyes must be held, as well as the ears of the audience. This is done largely by the physical actions of the speaker, also by the use he makes of his own eyes while in the act of speaking.

### *Overcoming Nervousness*

On your first appearance before an audience you will probably be nervous for a few minutes. Pay no attention to it—the feeling will soon wear off. Experienced speakers have stage fright at times. Assume a correct mental and physical Poise as quickly as possible, and uncertainty will vanish. Nothing stimulates the mind more quickly than a firm, confident physical attitude.

From the moment the speaker appears upon the platform, his whole body talks as well as his voice. A lounging attitude says to the audience, "*I am utterly indifferent to you.*" A haughty erectness with a supercilious elevation of the chin, says, "*I will condescend to favor you with a few words.*" A timid, hesitating approach, says, "*I am nervous, or ill prepared.*"

### *On making Your Initial Bow*

The impression you make at first, and the bearing you assume, affects your reception on the part of the audience and the consideration

it will accord your words. A few general suggestions are not amiss here. Walk upon the stage, or take your place at a moderate, but firm and confident gait. A step or motion that is too quick might suggest nervousness on your part; one that is too slow would indicate a studied deliberation or indifference. Hold your head erect, shoulders well braced, but keep the arms flexible in the shoulder sockets. The arms must not swing perceptibly nor yet be constrained at the sides.

Your entire attitude should breathe ease and confidence. If there is applause on your appearance do not attempt to speak until the applause subsides, but remain affable and make your acknowledgment with a slight bow of the head and body from the waist-line up. Any bow that you are called upon to make should require but one movement from the waist-line—the head and body from the waist moving as a unit without any separate motion of the head and not departing more than three or four inches from the perpendicular position.

If there is a presiding officer, the speaker should face him and make a bow by way of salutation. It ought not be performed with exaggerated gravity nor with an air of flippancy, as either might create a laugh.

There need be no facial expression, as a bow is intended only as a conventional courtesy. You then address the officer as, "*Mr. Chairman*," then turn to your audience whom you address as "*Ladies and Gentlemen*," or some other appropriate salutation.

The speaker must acquire the art of standing in a position that indicates grace and support to the body while speaking.

### *Gestures add to Significance*

Appropriate Gesture is frequently necessary in order to give full significance to words, and arises from the fact that words alone are not sufficiently expressive to convey the meaning conclusively. In reading from a book the mind generally is a slight pace in advance of the written matter, while in speaking, the mind usually is far ahead of the words,—anticipates what is to follow, and seeks some means of impressing the thought upon the hearer's mind.

### *Conversational Gestures*

In ordinary conversation the average American uses little Gesture. Even when excited he limits his gesticulation to a few forcible motions of the hand or arm. Some foreigners, however, use a superabundance of Gesture; not only using their hands and arms, but their heads, necks and shoulders to such an extent that a person can almost guess the

meaning of their conversation without understanding a single word of it. It is amusing to watch the gyrations of Greeks or Turks when they are conversing with each other. Every little clause is accentuated by some movement. The French and Italians have the same peculiarity in a lesser degree. This leads the celebrated French orator, Fenelon, to say in regard to his fellow-countrymen's art of delivery:—

*“A speaker's body should portray action only when there is movement in his words; and his body should remain in repose when what he says is of a simple, unimpassioned character. Nothing seems so absurd as the sight of a man lashing himself to a fury in the utterance of tame things. The more he sweats, the more he freezes the blood of his audience.”*

### *Exaggerated Gestures*

The pantomime actor exaggerates his Gestures thereby expressing the ideas he wishes to convey. In oratory, however, words express the ideas and Gestures are used only to strengthen, when it is necessary. We must, therefore, guard against excessive use of Gesture. A speaker may employ gestures for pictorial purposes. He may point to an imaginary heaven, or a distant prairie when speaking of such objects, or he may lay his finger on his lips to express silence;—but too frequent use of such Gestures

partakes of the nature of pantomime and the action becomes ludicrous.

A well known musical comedy actress made use of this principle in securing laughable effects. When, for instance, she said, "*I looked all around for you,*" she made the motion of a circle with her arms, and when she spoke of eating, she went through all of the actions of conveying food to her mouth with both hands. The words themselves were not humorous, but the exaggerated Gestures turned them to burlesque.

### *Discordant Gestures*

It is well for some actions to accompany the speaker's words, but they should be carefully chosen. If they apply to the thought expressed they will strengthen it, but if foreign to the thought, they will contradict and destroy the good intent. They must be in harmony, or they will produce discord. A discord in Gesture will pain the eye as much as an inharmonious musical chord will offend the ear.

In order therefore to produce the desired effect, the thoughts expressed in a speech should be well conceived, or, if the speech is an extemporaneous one, they should be anticipated by the speaker, in order that he may select appropriate Gestures and apply them circumspectly.

Many books on Public Speaking suggest that the speaker practice Gesture while standing before a mirror. The author of this Course is not in favor of this particular method. The reflection of the speaker is apt to appear ridiculous and tend to discourage him. It is better to practice until the use of Gesture becomes unconscious.

In many speeches, no Gestures at all need be used. Most unimpassioned speeches require only a distinct and calm utterance, and few passages admit of violent gesticulation. Each speaker must decide for himself when he is to use his arms or his body and how. Incessant flourishing of the arms while speaking is as silly as it would be to hop or dance while walking. There is an old story of a father who sent his awkward son to dancing school that he might learn to stand still properly. Similarly, a correct understanding of Gesture will teach us when not to use it.

The first effort of the speaker, therefore, should be not to indulge in strenuous Gesture, but to subdue and control himself.

### *Natural Gestures Not Always Best*

Some authorities that aim to teach public speaking, give as their first rule for Gesture, the dictum, "*Be natural.*" There is no greater absurdity than this

advice. An inexperienced speaker is extremely awkward when he is natural, both in the use of his voice and his body. The natural voice may be so feeble that it is inaudible, so high in pitch that it is effeminate, or so low that it suggests a grumble. A speaker's Gestures may naturally be gauche or angular, and may provoke laughter where serious consideration is intended. It is natural for some men to use many Gestures and for others to employ no gesticulation at all. It is a bad rule, therefore, which suggests "*being natural*." Endeavor, rather, to correct all natural imperfections and to acquire precision and grace of both voice and body — or their opposites — that all styles of delivery may be at your command.

Both voice and body should be so trained that one may unconsciously speak and act in a manner that has become natural to all variety of delivery. Between Gestures and when no Gestures are called for, the hands and arms should hang naturally at the sides not tensed nor strained in any way. Nor should they be used to fumble or indulge in personal eccentricities.



## CHAPTER II

### GESTURES of the FACE

#### *The Open and Closed Face*

**B**ROADLY speaking, there are but two kinds of emotion—those that are pleasurable and those that are not pleasurable.

For the first, the face is “open”; that is to say all the features express an “open,” optimistic, heroic, happy, victorious or pleasant emotion; while the closed face expresses the opposite, such as pessimistic, unheroic, unhappy, vanquished emotions, etc. The two illustrations are conceptions of these two contrasting facial expressions.



*The OPEN FACE.*

*Number 1. Correct. Showing how the face opens for pleasurable sensations and emotions.*



*The CLOSED FACE*

*Number 2. Correct. Showing how the face closes for unpleasurable sensations and emotions.*

The Gestures of the head and features are probably more telling than those of the arms and body. The expression of the face might be considered as a reflection of the soul and depicts in its own forceful way the workings of the mind. A speaker conveys a great variety of emotions by his smile or frown, by the raising or lowering of his eyebrows, the distortion of his mouth, etc., all of which resolves itself to this "*open*" or "*closed*" face, in varying degrees.

### *Motions of the Head*

The motions of the head are full of meaning in Public Speaking. Letting the head hang may denote shame or grief, reflection, etc. Holding it up denotes courage and pride; very high, with tilted chin, contempt or defiance. Nodding it means assent; shaking it sideways means dissent. Averting the head denotes dislike or horror; advancing it denotes attention.

### *Eye Service*

The use of the eyes while speaking calls for some explanation, for the eyes carry a message of their own. We naturally trust a man who looks us straight in the eye, and a direct gaze on the part of a speaker inspires confidence. The speaker's eyes should look directly

into the eyes of the chairman when speaking to him, and into the eyes of the audience when addressing them. His gaze should seem to include every person present.

A newspaper writer describing a well-known political orator, remarked:— "*He is a well-poised man with a keen eye that synchronizes with his brain in alertness to see and avail itself of what it sees.*" The eye has been described as the window of the soul and should reflect the inner workings of the spirit.

Here are a few denotations which the eyes may suggest. Raising the eyes, may accompany lofty appeal, interpret great joy, or denote reverence. Drooping the eye suggests sorrow, sad reflection, anger, etc. Looking vacantly forward, denotes serious reflection or gazing at an imaginary object. Moving the eyes from side to side, suggests doubt or fear, or the visualizing of several objects. The eyes can indicate distance or expansion of thought. They also indicate the direction of thought whether it be directed to the Supreme Being, to self, or to an imaginary character.

### *The Mouth, Forehead, etc.*

Drawing the corners of the mouth up, indicates amusement or joy. Drawing them down, indicates sorrow or pain. Elevating one cor-

ner, signifies contempt. Bringing the lips together as though whistling, indicates comic surprise. Wrinkling the forehead, signifies thought, doubt or anger. Inclining the ear, signifies a listening attitude.

### CHAPTER III

## POSITION *of the* BODY

#### *Correct and Wrong*

WE all like to see a man enter a room bearing himself in an agreeable and dignified manner. A man who stands or sits in a slouchy position, usually has a slouchy mind. It is not necessary for a man to stand awkwardly because he finds that position natural. He must strive to be natural while being dignified. The body should be generally erect while speaking; neither constantly shifting nor motionless. In standing still, the attitude should be one of relaxation or else, as a writer expressed it;—“*You will have the aspect of a cataleptic, stiffened into a statue.*” The body should be upright and firmly set. The arms at the sides in their natural position, the head slightly elevated, the chest expanded.

Never turn your back on your audience, nor incline your head toward one shoulder. Avoid tossing the body from side to side.

The following illustrations show the right and wrong positions of the body. Note the ease of the correct positions and the disagreeable effects in those marked "wrong." Remember in general that holding the body erect denotes energy, strength and courage. But there are variations of this position which may be used to good advantage. Thus, stooping forward, indicates attention or compassion. Bending forward, indicates devotion or respect. Throwing the body back, may indicate pride or aversion.

### *Avoid Extremes*

The speaker is warned not to stand too stiffly, *like a ramrod*," nor lackadaisically, *"like a sponge,"* for an extreme in any direction is bad. It is not good form to pace forward and backward while talking—*"the panther act."* Too little motion is less offensive than too much.



### Correct Position—Number 3

*The weight is sustained on both feet equally, head properly poised, shoulders held erect and slightly backward, arms at full length, relaxed at sides, feet flat on the floor, heels slightly separated and the angle between the feet thirty to forty-five degrees.*



### **Wrong Position—Number 4**

*Weight is too much on the right hip, the head inclining forward, shoulders slouching, the feet too far apart and one arm slightly constrained. This position suggests indifference to your audience and lack of certainty in yourself.*





### Wrong Position—Number 5

*The whole body slouching and inclining forward and the head not erect. The attitude suggests nervousness and a lack of interest in the audience and the occasion. No matter how interesting your subject may be it will fail to carry conviction.*



### Wrong Position—Number 6

*The whole attitude lounging, betokening utter indifference. Such an attitude would at once stamp the speaker as careless and ill prepared for his discourse. It may be permissible at a social tea, but is objectionable on the platform.*



### Wrong Position—Number 7

*Body oblique to audience, the whole poise, especially that of the tilted chin, bespeaking condescension, antagonism or defiance toward the audience. This attitude might have gone very well in the "French Court" days, but not today before an American gathering.*



### Wrong Position—Number 8

*Poise almost apologetic. This position is legitimate where the occasion is very informal, but detracts from the dignity and should not be indulged in before a strange audience. It is neither one thing nor another and anything that doesn't add to a discourse detracts from it.*

## CHAPTER IV

### POSITION *of* LEGS *and* FEET

#### *Meanings Expressed by the Lower Limbs*

THE yokel is noted for the awkwardness of his feet; the dancing master, on the other hand, is held up as a model of affectation. The public speaker must ape neither. Let him hold his feet and legs in a position consistent with strength and manly bearing, his toes turned out moderately, but not constrained. The body supported by both legs equally; so placed that the weight can be shifted from one leg to the other.

The illustrations of feet graphically convey both correct and incorrect positions. Straight knees signify steadfastness. Bent knees indicate timidity, weakness, fear or supplication. A leg advanced suggests desire or courage. A leg drawn back, denotes aversion or fear. Stamping with one foot means anger. Dancing or leaping, signifies joy or exaltation. Stability of position and general ease of action, depend to a considerable extent upon the right use of the legs and feet.



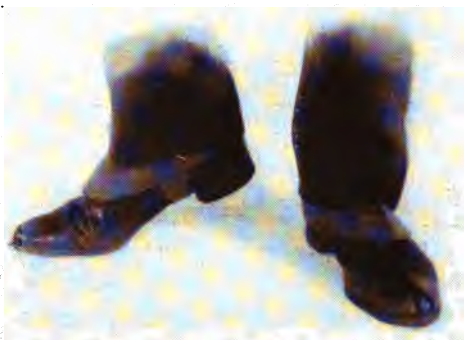
**Correct Position—Number 9**

*The weight of the body is equally distributed, the feet flat on the floor, angle and amount of separation correct.*



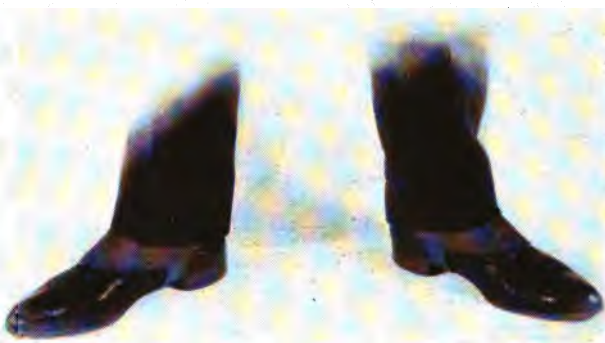
**Wrong Position—Number 10**

*Feet too near together, giving too narrow a base for the erect figure, and making it difficult for the speaker to shift his position gracefully.*



### Wrong Position—Number 11

*One heel elevated, the bent knee indicates weakness or fear, and the entire pose shows lack of determination or assurance.*



### Wrong Position—Number 12

*Feet sprawling, much too far apart. The position denotes defiance and braggadocio. It might be useful in a humorous discourse in impersonating a pompous man, but not in a formal speech.*

## CHAPTER V

### *The USE of the HANDS*

#### *Many and Varied Expressions*

**T**HE expressions of the hands are as varied and significant as language—there is no sentiment which they cannot convey. By the proper use of the hands, the speaker beckons, dismisses, threatens, deplores, questions, denies. A single motion of the hand may express joy, sorrow, doubt, repentance, time, number and other abstract thoughts. They have an unmistakable meaning which seems to be the same among savages and civilized people. A man thrown among a barbarous race, comprehending nothing of the language, can nevertheless make himself understood by means of manual signs. This being the case, it is easy to realize that gestures of the hands and arms are factors in public speaking.

Yet an inexperienced speaker may put his hands to such poor use, that they weaken instead of strengthen his delivery. To use the hands at variance with the thought, to churn the air with them vigorously, or to shake the



index finger as a sign of emphasis, are common defects among speakers, and should be studiously avoided. The illustrations show the correct and wrong postures of the hands and they should be carefully remembered by the speaker.

### *Some General Indications*

The fingers of the hand are not to be kept together rigidly, nor should they be separated by large spaces between them. The fingers should be easily and naturally bent. While emphatic gestures are made quickly, extending the hand to indicate direction should be done more leisurely. When using the index finger as a pointer, it should be extended with authority, and not be weakly bent.

### *The Language of the Hands*

Raising the hands toward heaven, expresses devotion and supplication; wringing them together denotes grief; holding them dejectedly suggests despair; folding them, indicates satisfaction or idleness; interweaving the fingers, denotes musing and thoughtfulness. Lifting them and the eyes towards heaven, is a solemn appeal; waving the hand away, means dismissal; extending the right hand, conveys welcome or pity; scratching the head, suggests perplexity; laying the right hand on the heart, indicates love or

solemn affirmation; placing the index finger on the lips, commands silence; both hands held on a level with the face with palms downward, confers a blessing; the hands held before the face, pleads grief; with the palms outward, it is abhorrence or fear; snapping the fingers, says "*I am indifferent.*"

### *A Universal Language*

Quintilian, the old Latin philosopher, considered the gestures of the hands of such importance, that he attributes to them the faculty of universal language. The action of the other parts of the body assist the speaker, but the hands themselves speak. They encourage, supplicate, restrain, convict, admire, and portray all shades of meaning.

Another celebrated writer makes this observation, "*A man full of wisdom and ability, would not have been superior to a naked trunk or a block, had he not been adorned with hands, interpreters and messengers of his thoughts.*"



### Correct—Number 13

*Gesture of Direction—Hand idealized, fingers gracefully extended, not stiff nor awkward, but indicating a mental vision that accompanies direction of the fingers.*



### Wrong—Number 14

*Hand is not idealized, and the direction indicated by the index finger is a distance which would terminate within a few feet of the body. The middle finger is never used to indicate direction.*



**Correct—Number 15**

*A strong Gesture of Direction, all the fingers, with the exception of the index finger, folded under, and the index finger strongly tensed.*



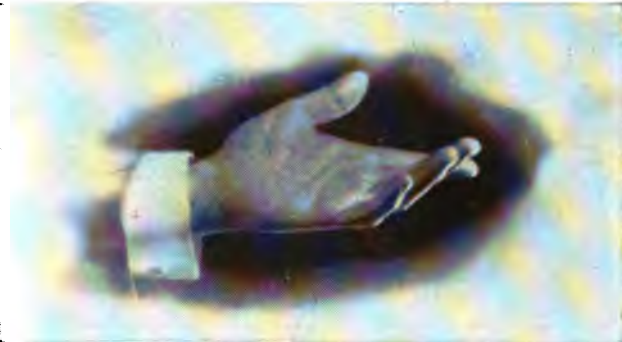
**Wrong—Number 16**

*Index finger too relaxed, and distance indicated by a curved line downward. The gesture shows hesitation and uncertainty, and detracts from the words of the speaker.*



**Wrong—Number 17**

*Hand not idealized and the direction by two fingers, instead of by the index finger only. The middle finger detracts from the strength of the gesture instead of adding to it.*



**Correct—Number 18**

*Gesture of Interrogation or Appeal — Hand idealized, palm up. First finger straight, knuckles of the other fingers, approximately on a level with that of index finger.*



### **Wrong—Number 19**

*Hand not idealized, looks like a scoop. The fingers are not in the right relative positions, and the gesture is weak and unsympathetic.*



### **Wrong—Number 20**

*Hand not idealized, very awkward. The index and second fingers are too straight, the other two are too curved. The gesture has no character and is ungraceful.*



**Correct—Number 21**

*Gesture of Emphasis—Clenched hand, employed upon strong emphasis only. A glance shows that the man making the gesture is in earnest and using a powerful argument.*



**Wrong—Number 22**

*Hand unnaturally clenched, showing weakness and indecision. It could be used to indicate the grasping or holding tight to an object, but not for emphasis.*

## CHAPTER VI

# GESTURES of the ARMS and HANDS

### *Capable of Portraying any Emotion*

WE have discussed gestures of the hands. It must be evident, however, that gestures of the arms must be treated in close relationship. For as they are indissolubly linked by nature, so too, are their uses co-incident. The arm, the hand and the fingers, united in one flexible line of several joints, form what is called "*The weapon of the orator.*" The co-ordination of the arm and hand permits of any variety of motion, and these motions serve admirably to portray a variety of emotions.

The right arm is chiefly used in gesticulating, although the left arm is often brought into action in a sympathetic way, or to obtain relief from monotony. It may also be used to call attention to objects on the left side of the body as distinguished from the right; or it may be used after a right hand gesture to indicate contrast. But, in using either arm, the speaker should be careful to use it from the shoulder and not from the elbow. The motion should



be in curves when the thought is gracious, but in angles when force is called for. The arms cross the body *only* in contemptuous assertion—*Remember this always.*

### *Personal Gestures to be Avoided*

The slightest movement made by the speaker, whether intentional or not, will be construed by the audience as a gesture. Movements may be considered as of two kinds;—Personal and Interpretative. By Personal Gesture is meant any peculiar movement or habit of the speaker having no connection with, or relation to, the substance of his speech. Such gestures include running the fingers through the hair, scratching the head, twitching the fingers, putting the hands in the pockets, fumbling with watch chains, vest buttons, eyeglasses, etc.

There is an old story about Walter Scott, who as a boy was very nervous. When he recited his lessons at school, he always fumbled with his lower waistcoat button, and as long as it was there, he knew his lesson. One day one of his companions cut off the button without Scott's being aware of it. When he got up to recite, his hand went as usual towards the mascot, but it was gone. He got nervous, flustered, failed in his lesson and went to the tail-end of his class.

There is a certain lack of Poise in many speakers which compels them to do just such foolish things. Don't stick your thumbs in the sleeves of your vest, or under the tail of your coat. It is an awkward personal gesture. Don't thump the table with your fist, or clap your hands together for emphasis. Don't shake your index finger as though you were threatening some enemy.

All these defects of gesture are employed by some of our best known orators, but they are wrong, nevertheless, and there is no reason why you should copy a failing, when there are so many legitimate gestures that will add instead of detract from your speech as personal gestures always do.

### *Illustrations of "Personal" Gestures*

The following four illustrations are introduced in order that you may understand precisely what is meant by "*Personal Gestures*" and judge for yourself how ludicrous they are. In dramatic art gestures such as these may be allowable because they show indifference or contempt for the character with whom the actor is speaking, or because they fit the role; but if they are used in public speaking, they will be taken as a mark of contempt for one's audience or an indisputable evidence of nervousness or lack of Poise.



### Wrong—Number 23

*What effect do you suppose it will have upon your audience if you pick your ear, scratch your head, rub your nose, stroke your chin or indulge in similar useless movements? They are the result of nervousness, shyness, or bad habits. Avoid them. Every movement is a gesture.*



### Wrong—Number 24

*A very general habit of playing with watch-chain, fumbling with a coat button, tugging at his tie, etc.,—all evidences of nervousness. Note the faint-hearted gesture of the left hand. Let every gesture be appropriate to the spoken word,—a full one, not a half gesture.*



### **Wrong—Number 25**

*Leaning against a chair or table, standing in a bent, slovenly position, will impress your audience with your nervousness or indifference and nullify whatever good your speech may contain. Show a proper respect for your hearers and for yourself, by standing free and erect.*



### **Wrong—Number 26**

*When you stand like this you present an unattractive personality. You appear awkward, even contemptuous of your audience. No matter how eloquent your words, they will fail to impress your hearers. Stand erect,—brace up. Let your attitude of body reflect your attitude of mind.*

## CHAPTER VII

# INTERPRETATIVE GESTURES

### *Divided into Five Classes*

**T**HERE are five principal gestures to be remembered;—they are Gestures of Direction, of Appeal, of Emphasis, of Enumeration, and of Impersonation. We call them "*Interpretative Gestures*" to distinguish them from dramatic and personal gestures, which are to be avoided in public speaking. We consider each separately and illustrate them so graphically that a speaker should have no difficulty in applying them.

The Gestures illustrated in the following pages we call "*Stock Gestures*" because they can be properly used in any dignified address, and cover practically all requirements of public speaking. Wherever in the text you find it suggested that a certain Gesture be employed, it is not imperative that the gesture suggested be used. You may select or create a better one of your own, but you will display good taste by following the character of the gesture referred to and illustrated for your guidance.

### *Gesture of Direction*

This Gesture explains itself, it is as its name implies, "*a locating gesture.*" It is made with the hand idealized, palm down, by either hand, or both. If the distance is determinate, the eye looks in the direction indicated by the hand thereby locating the object and giving it proper distance. If the distance is indeterminate, the eye takes no part in the Gesture, that is, it does not look in the direction indicated by the hand.

This is merely common sense, but, even so, it is a ruling frequently disobeyed by prominent speakers. To say "*Look at Scotland, where they are erecting monuments,*" to suggest the direction of Scotland, half across the world, would be legitimate, but to glance in the direction which the hand indicates, would be an absurdity, as Scotland is not visible to the eye of the speaker nor of the audience. If two or more directions of thought are implied, the eye should follow the principal one only. This is correct psychology. In real life with your attention riveted upon a burning building, where human beings are being incinerated, would it be possible for you to withdraw your attention and say: "*Oh, look at that pretty little dog!*"

The eye must follow the gesture of Direction upon a principal thought only where more than one direction of thought is contained in the words and then only when the object spoken of is within the distance of eye vision, if all obstructions, such as walls, etc., were removed. Notice that we have said that in this Gesture of Direction, the palm must be down, hand



idealized (Illustration No. 13), parallel with the floor. This is an invariable rule. The moment the palm is turned up, it suggests an appeal;—"Give me something."

### *Varying the Gestures*

There is a good deal of nonsense in "*Variety of Gesture*." It is true that variety of Gesture is most desirable but "*Variety*" for its own sake is not desirable. Vary the gestures only when the thought varies. Examples;—"Here was the Blue, and there was the Grey" these words describing the positions of two armies, opposed not only in location but in spirit may, most appropriately, be visualized by the speaker and their respective positions be indicated by Gestures of Direction, one with the left hand the other with the right hand. But, in a case where the action was fixed in locality as being off at the right, the speaker could not circumspectly employ the left hand merely for the sake of "*Variety*."

### *Locating the Scene of Action*

While dealing with this gesture of Direction, or, if you choose a *gesture locating action*, it may be wise to call attention to this *conventional ruling* in the speaker's art, and that is,

that it is best to select a point towards your right side as the location of your principal scene of action. Though the speaker be left-handed, the majority of people in the audience are not so and should he locate his imaginary picture toward his left, the audience, without knowing why, would miss *strength* in the vividness of the description.

It is the intent to give as few conventional rules as possible in this common sense course of Public Speaking, but this one ought to be emphasized;—the placing of your chief descriptive scene (if you are employing one), at an approximate angle of  $45^{\circ}$  from your right shoulder. To be more explicit;—suppose you are facing your audience directly; and extend your right arm sideways in a straight line from your shoulder. Bring your arm forward so that it is halfway between that line and a line drawn from your body to center of the audience and you will have the right placing for your scene. Usually it will be in the direction of the corner of the hall in which you are speaking.

By this selection of a point  $45^{\circ}$  to the right your face will be seen by all people in front of you. By placing this point of action too far to the right, the audience sees little, or nothing, of your facial ex-

pression; to place it directly in front of you would compel you to employ Gestures that would come between your face and the eyes of the audience. To repeat, place your principal scene of action at an angle of  $45^{\circ}$  on your right side.

Once in a great while, when you wish to suggest a picture of "*forging ahead*," the "*march of progress*," "*surmounting opposing obstacles*," etc., it is legitimate to use a direction immediately in front of the body. Examples: "*Nay, not to the left; nay, not to the right. But on, straight on, and the Isles are in sight!*"

In Gestures of Direction the height of the hand and arm, from the shoulder depends upon the nature of the thought expressed. Where the idea is elevated, or the allusion is made to anything high, like a flag, or the stars, the hand should be brought well up. Where the thought is of a distant land, or something out of sight or on the horizon, the arm had better be at right angles to the body. When the object spoken about is on or near the ground, as a hero's grave, the arm points downward. No definite rule can be given, but the elevation depends upon conditions. In the sentence, "*They are erecting monuments in Scotland*," if the accent is on "*monuments*," then the hand is raised to indicate the height of a monument, but if the accent is on "*Scotland*," then the arm should be held towards the horizon, to indicate distance. The same holds true for Gestures of Appeal. If the appeal is made to Heaven, the hand is held higher than if the appeal is to a near-by person or object.



### **Gesture of Direction—Number 27**

*This is one of the most frequently called for Gestures of Direction and serves a variety of purposes. The hand idealized is advanced at an angle of  $45^{\circ}$ , the eyes follow the gesture.*

*"There stands the house where he was born."*

*"Behold the man endowed with Nature's gifts."*



### **Gesture of Direction—Number 28**

*Same as Number 27, but made with the left hand. These gestures do not convey the idea of force or emphasis, but suggest general description. The eyes follow the gesture.*

*"The Turk was sleeping in his tent,"*

*"Upon this very spot."*



### **Gesture of Direction—Number 29**

*Hand idealized, palm down, but indeterminate Direction, the eyes do not follow the Gesture, implying great distance which the sight cannot reach.*

*“God measures his infinite spaces with his stars.”*

*“In Belgium, where thousands of martyrs lie.”*



**Gesture of Direction—Number 30**

*Double-handed Gesture of Direction—Eyes move from right to left as though taking in the general action. Indicating a broad expanse,—also a statement of wide application.*

*“Among the many Nations of the earth.”*

*“This wide expanse of fertile territory.”*



### **Gesture of Direction—Number 31**

*Indeterminate distance, hand not idealized, finger points; whole gesture tensed, for emphatic thought. Also indicates a far-off point. Eyes do not follow the gesture.*

*“It means a Calvary for each soldier who died.”*

*“There, beyond the horizon lay the promised land.”*





### **Gesture of Direction—Number 32**

*Tensed, generally coupled with thought of emphasis. Can also be used advantageously as a Gesture of Accusation. The eyes may follow the gesture or not.*

*"This is a doctrine as old as the pyramids."*

*"As far as the eye can see are fields of wheat."*



### **Gesture of Direction—Number 33**

*Right hand idealized, expressing opposition, the eyes indicating the direction of the antagonistic thought.*

*"It shall not perish from the earth."*

*"The murderous hordes must be kept out at any cost."*



### **Gesture of Direction—Number 34**

*Denoting Opposition—Left hand idealized, eyes indicating direction of the antagonistic thought. Similar to the preceding.*

*“It is no disparagement to the man whom we have named.”*

*“What, yield to the invader? Perish the thought!”*



### **Gesture of Direction—Number 35**

*Doubled-handed Gesture of Opposition—With the corresponding expression of the eyes, used to denote horror and fear. May also indicate surprise at something unexpected.*

*“It has been bought by their agony and blood.”*

*“I am appalled at the possibility of such a thing.”*

### *Gesture of Appeal*

The next gesture to be considered is the Gesture of Appeal or Interrogation. This is made with the Hands Idealized, palms *always up*, either hand or both. The reason the palms are turned up directly to the ceiling in the employment of this gesture is a very logical one. If you ask a person to give you an apple the palm is held to receive it. Likewise if you ask for an answer to a question, "*Is it not so, gentlemen?*" or, if you ask for forgiveness "*Will you forgive me?*" the palms are turned up as if the answer looked for in the one case, or the pardon you seek in the other, could be laid in the hand.

This Gesture of Appeal or Interrogation is used whenever a question is asked and a gesture accompanies it. A speaker need not hesitate to employ it with frequency and can, at his choice, use one hand or the other or both to lend *variety of action* when the thought permits.



### **Gesture of Appeal—Number 36**

*Right hand idealized palm up—Asking a question, or stating a proposition that calls for no argument. The eyes do not follow the hand.*

*“Is there no chance to make the good better?”*

*“I appeal to the gentlemen in behalf of this measure.”*



### **Gesture of Appeal—Number 37**

*Hand idealized, palm up, same as 35. but with left hand. Can be used in any statement appealing for approval. The eyes do not follow the hand.*

*“Are things so ordered that all men are free?”*

*“I have told the truth and await your verdict.”*



### **Gesture of Appeal—Number 38**

*Both hands, same as two preceding. When the appeal is forceful the gesture is tensed and the stretch of the arms is greater.*

*"All of you must do or die to avert the evil!"*

*"If this be treason, make the most of it."*





### **Gesture of Appeal—Number 39**

*Right hand idealized, palm up. A Gesture of devotion or patriotism,—appealing to things above the commonplace. The eyes follow the hand.*

*“Our country’s flag; long may it wave!”*

*“Above,—in the Heaven is rest eternal.”*



### **Gesture of Appeal—Number 40**

*Both hands used to apostrophize an object, or in an appeal to something spiritual. The eyes are raised in the same direction.*

*“To ask forgiveness of the God of Nations.”*

*“We offer our hearts and hands to our country.”*



**Combination Gesture—Number 41**

*Gesture of Direction, coupled with that of Appeal—hand idealized palm up, either hand, eyes apostrophizing the indicated objects.*

*“Surely such a man deserves the nomination.”*

*“Let this monument be a tribute to his virtues.”*

### *Gesture of Emphasis*

The third Gesture is that of Emphasis. As in the case of Gesture of Direction and in the Gesture of Appeal the hands are idealized. Here too, we use either hand or both, palms up or a clenched fist. This Gesture is merely a stroke or "*blow*" and the only law underlying the use of this Gesture is the common sense one that the "*blow*" in its strength and in its sweep be in direct proportion to the strength of the thought actuating it.

The stroke always accompanies the emphasized thought. Thus: "*It is not so*" if you emphasize with the voice the word "*not*" the stroke accompanies this emphatic word. If you emphasize the word "*so*" the stroke comes upon this word.

If the assertion is only moderately strong the Gesture of Emphasis is delivered with moderate strength, moving only through a small segment from above to a lower position. If the emphasis is stronger, the stroke is harder and the segment of the circle, through which it moves, is greater, starting at a higher level and falling lower than in the gesture which was less emphatic. The stronger the emphasis the stronger the gesture.



### **Gesture of Emphasis—Number 42**

*Palm up, hand idealized,—raised to strike a downward blow which must follow immediately, and be intensified in keeping with the force of the emphasis called for. The eyes forward.*

*“Men must be taught the vital lessons.”*

*“I denounce him as a Traitor to the cause.”*



### **Gesture of Emphasis—Number 43**

*Similar to the preceding, except with the left hand. The hand strikes downward immediately. The eyes do not follow the gesture.*

*"I deny the allegation! It is false!"*

*"Let me impress you with the fact that our Liberties are in danger."*



**Gesture of Emphasis—Number 44**

*Both hands more intensive than with one hand.—  
The downward strokes must be made simultane-  
ously. The eyes do not follow the gesture.*

*"We dare not be neglectful of our sacred duty."*

*"Though all the world accused him I would not  
believe it."*



### **Gesture of Emphasis—Number 45**

*Right hand—Clenched fist. Used in clinching an argument, employing a threat or determined opposition. The eyes do not follow the gesture.*

*"It may be defined as the essence of tyranny."*

*"Strike for your altars and your fires."*





### **Gesture of Emphasis—Number 46**

*Left hand—Clenched fist, a variation of number 45 used for forceful emphasis, argument or violent opposition. The eyes do not follow the gesture.*

*“The biggest danger to America is not the Reds, but our indifference to them.”*

*“Down with the tyrant who destroys our rights.”*



### **Gesture of Emphasis—Number 47**

*Double-handed—Clenched fist, the downward strokes upon a strong thought or in series, gaining in strength if the emphasis increases. This is the strongest gesture that may be used in Public Speaking.*

*“To sell your vote is as bad as to sell your honor.”*

*Gesture of Enumeration*

There is no gesture in Public Speaking that is called for more often and perhaps less understood than the Gesture of Enumeration.

In endeavoring to enumerate several thoughts, many speakers gesture by alternating the arms—first the right, then the left and then back to the right, etc. This is mechanical, ungraceful and often times ludicrous. Why they persist in this is a mystery, but many do just the same.

The Gesture of Enumeration is simple and when understood is most serviceable. Any number of ideas may be enumerated but rarely is there a call for more than four.

When a number of separate but allied ideas, all of which are equally vital, follow each other consecutively, the Gesture, palm up or down, is modified to suit the purpose. It then becomes a Gesture of Enumeration, and as such plays its part in Public Speaking. It is produced by extending the arm, the same as any other Gesture. For each thing, thought or change of idea enumerated, the arm and hand make a short, emphatic stroke. Between these strokes the arm recedes slightly as shown in the illustration Number 48. These downward and then receding strokes take a

degree of force, according to the energy or nature of the enumeration—more forceful thoughts require longer and stronger strokes, while a less impassioned enumeration calls for but slight motion.

Thus in the sentence,—

*“The Constitution guarantees to each of us,  
LIFE, LIBERTY and the PURSUIT of Happiness.”*

the word LIFE requires a slight downward stroke of the arm—then a moving back of the arm a few inches and the word LIBERTY requires another downward stroke, and so on for the three enumerations.

*“They have KILLED our men, OUTRAGED our  
women and KIDNAPPED our children.”*

In this enumeration the strokes should be more emphatic, as befits the greater emotion expressed.

The stroke of the Gesture should be suited to the voice and fall on the emphatic words. It is to the eye what Emphasis and Inflection are to the ear, and should be accurately timed.

The illustration on page 73 shows the hand in three positions, ready to make its very short downward stroke, which should never be more than a few inches. Each of these positions indicates the enumeration of an idea and the



### **Gesture of Enumeration—Number 48**

*The hand idealized takes the lowest position shown, and then strokes downward a few inches, then it goes to the middle shaded position and strokes there, then to the top shaded position and makes its third short stroke. Any number of strokes may be made up to six. Either hand.*

force of the stroke should be in proportion to the emphasis required. The hand is not to move backward to the next position without having made its short, downward stroke.

While the Gesture of Enumeration is one of the most useful and frequent of all gestures, it must not be overdone. After four or five consecutive strokes it becomes monotonous. It is well to vary the groups from one hand to the other if two such sentences follow each other in quick succession. As a stirring climax, both hands may be used. After the last stroke of Enumeration, if the sentence be closed, the gesticulating hand or hands should fall to the speaker's side in a position of rest.

### *Ascending and Descending Enumeration*

If each thought in the enumeration is co-equal with other thoughts contained in it, the Gestures do not increase in force or in amplitude of movement. But, if the thoughts increase in value, then each stroke of Enumeration becomes stronger in force and has more movement. This is what is called an *Ascending Enumeration*. If the thoughts decrease in value the strokes of the Gesture likewise decrease in force and length. This is called a *Descending Enumeration*. Examples:

Ascending Enumeration: "*There is not a social, political or religious privilege which you enjoy today,*"—Descending Enumeration: "*which was not bought for you by the blood, and the tears, and the patient sufferings of a minority.*"

### *Gestures of Impersonation*

The fifth and last classification of Gesture may be described by either one of these three words; Imitative, Impersonating or Dramatic, and no illustrations are necessary. They are simply Gestures of mimicry; and the only law governing their use is "*custom.*" Such gestures include going through the actions of shooting, fanning, dealing cards, peering through field glasses or any imitative action. In dignified address it is safest to use only the three classes of Gesture already mentioned, those of Direction, Appeal and Emphasis. Dramatic Gesture is belittling in a dignified speech, and if used at all, must be used sparingly.

### *Idealized Hands*

You will note that in outlining the laws of Gesture in the first named three classes, it is said, "*Hand idealized.*" This means simply

that when the hand is extended you must give some thought to the relative positions of your fingers and thumb. (See Figures 13 and 18—relating to Hands.) The first finger is straight, the knuckles of the second and third fingers are approximately on a level with the knuckle of the first, or index finger, but are bent slightly from this joint; little finger and the thumb are held off from the hand about equi-distant. In other words the hand is held just as you see it in art pictures, or in stained glass windows of a church where the subject of the painting is pronouncing a benediction. This Idealization of the hand applies to both hands and to both positions of the hands whether the palm is down or up.

When in doubt as to the form the hand shall assume, a speaker is always safe in employing the "*Hand idealized*" for any and all gestures, unless the thought indicates some other gesture such as the pointed finger, clenched fist, etc.



## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUDING SUGGESTIONS

#### *The Language of Nature*

FROM what the speaker has learned of the study of gesture in this book, as well as in the first book of *The Course*, in which "*A Vision of the Past*," and "*The Message*," were carefully analyzed, he may agree that "*gesture conveys a power greater than words*." It is the language of nature and conveys a universal meaning often without the utterance of sound. Ancient and modern orators have used gestures for centuries and yet there are few modern speakers who use them properly.

Analyzing the functions of gesture, and grouping them according to their results, we cannot do better than reprint a portion of a well known book by Austin, entitled "*Chiromania, or a Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery*"; published over one hundred years ago, but as applicable to-day as when it was written.

#### *Magnificence of Gesture*

*From Chiromania or a Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery.*

This implies space through which the arm and hand

are made to move. The center of its motion is the shoulder. The action is flowing and unconstrained. The transitions are easy, and the accompaniments are correct in all respects, illustrative of the principle action. The motions of the head are free, and the inflections of the body manly and dignified.

### *Boldness of Gesture*

This portrays the elevated courage and self-confidence which ventures to hazard any action productive of a grand or striking effect. In this gesture unexpected positions, elevation and transitions, surprise by their novelty and grace.

### *Energy of Gesture*

This denotes the firmness of the whole action, and in the support which the voice receives from the precision of the gesture which aids its emphasis.

### *Variety of Gesture*

This implies the ability of readily adapting suitable and different gestures to each sentiment and situation so as to avoid recurring too frequently into one favorite set of gestures.

### *Simplicity of Gesture*

This results from such a character of gesture as appears the natural result of the sentiments; and is neither carried beyond the exact feeling nor falls short of it.

*Grace of Gesture*

This is the result of all other perfections, arising from a dignified self-possession of mind, and the power of personal expression according to the truest taste.

*Propriety of Gesture*

This consists in the judicious use of gestures best suited to illustrate or express the sentiment. They are the true and natural gestures.

*Precision of Gesture*

This arises from the just preparation and the application of due force, and the timing of the action; when the preparation is neither too much abridged and dry, nor too pompously displayed; when the stroke of the gesture is made with such a degree of force as suits the character of the sentiments of the speaker.

CHAPTER IX  
**A FEW DON'TS**

*Reminders to be Remembered*

**D**ON'T hold the body too rigid or constrained.

Don't use short steps or doubtful, timid movements.

Don't hesitate to enforce your ideas with bold gestures when the thought calls for it.

Don't show feebleness or indecision in the use of your arms.

Don't be guilty of monotony of gesture—use variety.

Don't display awkwardness, vulgarity or rusticity.

Don't use false, contradictory, or unsuitable gestures.

Don't saw the air with your arms.

Don't use the forearm from the elbow. The arm should be moved as a whole.

Don't indulge in mannerisms that are ugly or unbecoming.

Don't play or fumble with any part of your attire. This means avoid all personal gestures.

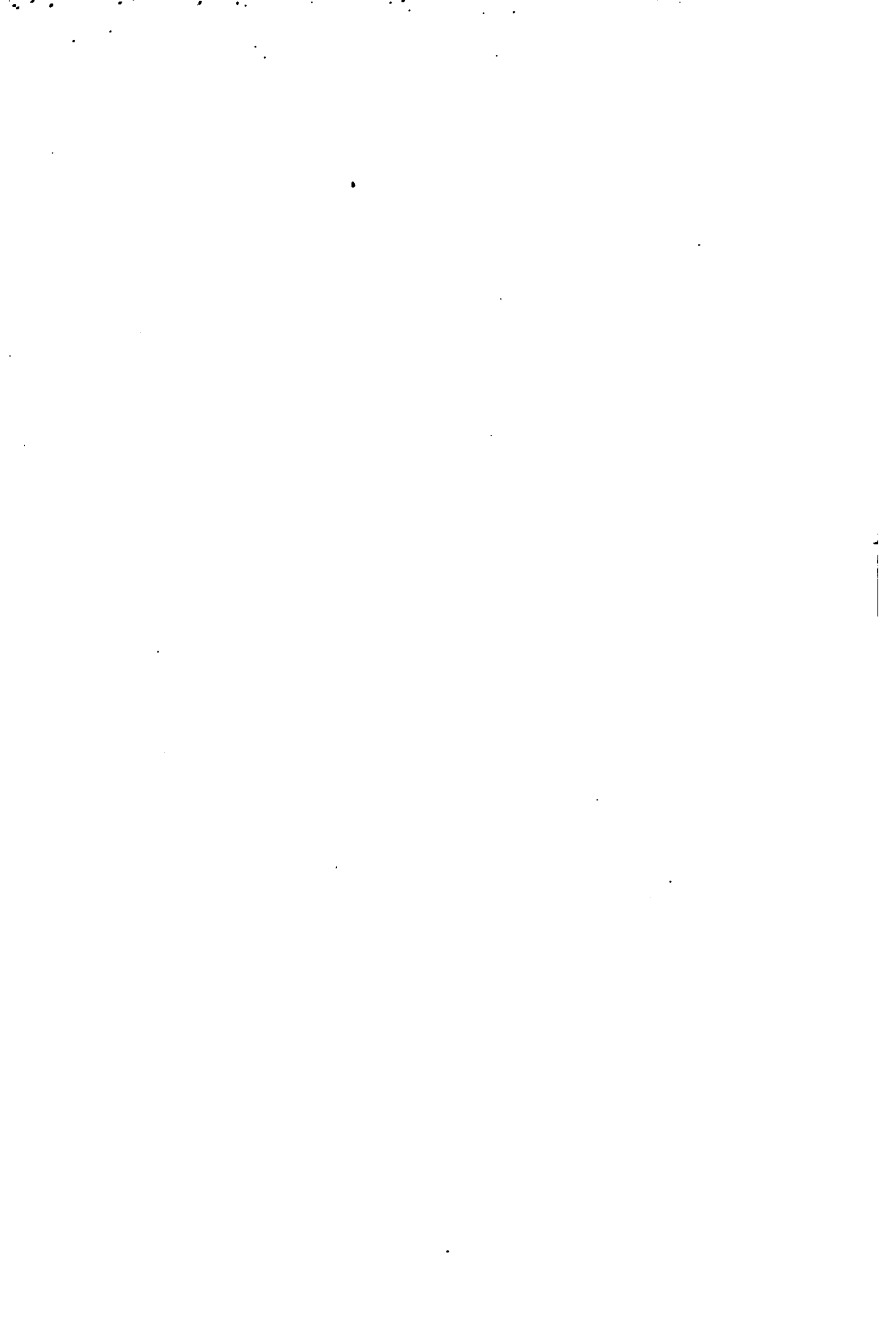
Don't keep your arms in ceaseless motion.

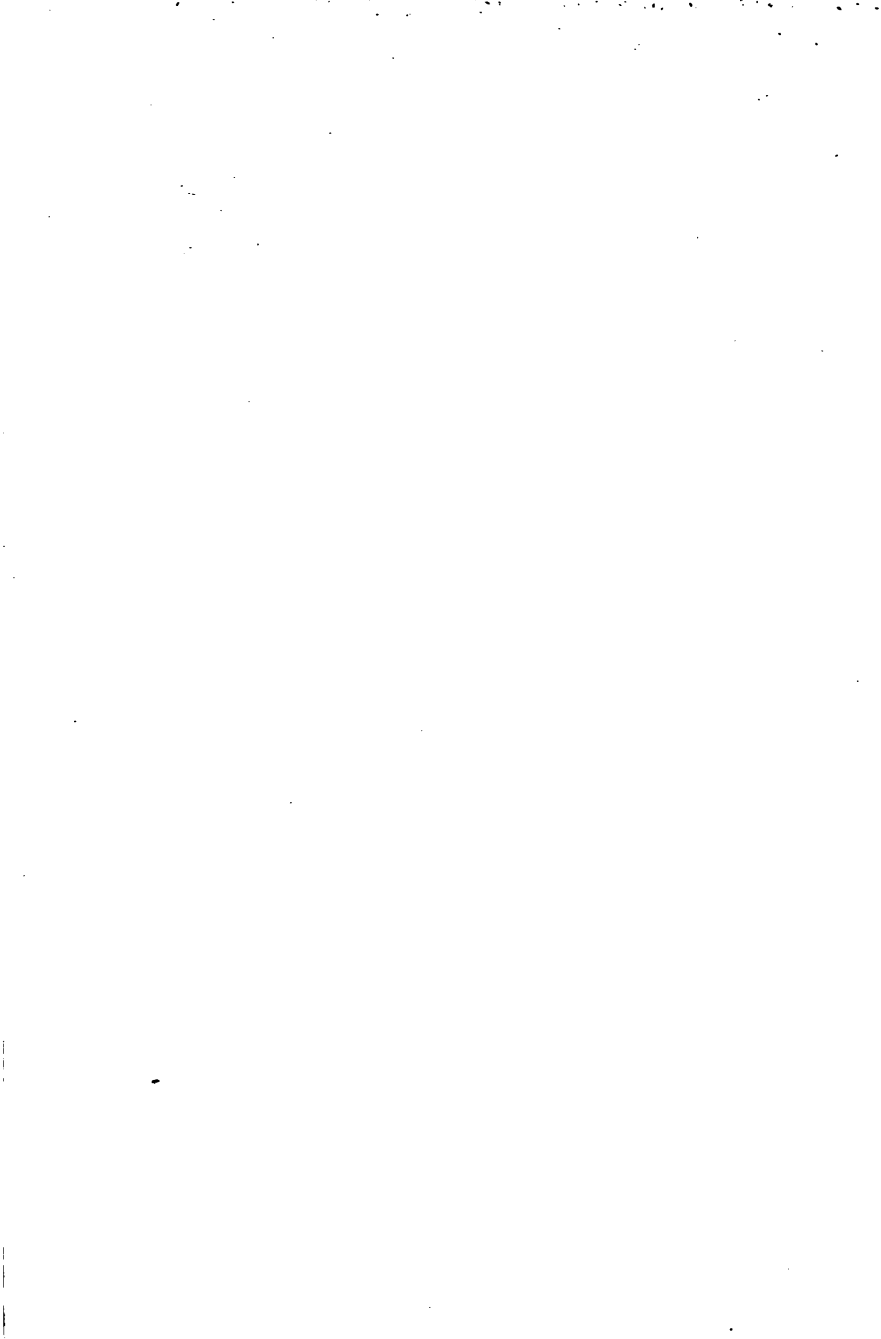
Don't have a newspaper, book or other conspicuous object in your pocket where it will bulge and attract the attention of your audience.

Don't button your coat. It usually fits and hangs better if unbuttoned, and makes you appear less constrained.

Don't make faint, half-hearted gestures,—put your will into them. Use whole gestures straight from the shoulder, that add meaning and force to your words.

Don't imagine that you can become a qualified orator without diligent application and close attention to the suggestions given in this course of instruction, and particularly those applying to Poise, Position and Gesture.











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